

# Annapolis Police Department



## GENERAL ORDER

**Number: E.9**

**Issue Date: April  
2001**

**TO:** All Personnel

**SUBJECT:** Traffic Ancillary Services

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order is to provide procedures for assisting motorists in emergency and non-emergency situations, vehicle towing procedures, handling of roadway hazards and abandoned vehicle procedures.

### POLICY

It shall be the policy of the Annapolis Police Department to recognize that assisting motorists is an important activity performed by the Department. The Annapolis Police Department is dedicated to the smooth and efficient flow of traffic throughout the city.

#### **I. General Assistance to the Motorist**

- A. Officers shall offer reasonable assistance to motorists who are in need of aid. This will apply at all hours of the day.
- B. Officers shall be constantly alert for roadway users who appear to need assistance. Officers shall provide information and directions upon request.
- C. Officers shall notify the Communications Section of the location where assistance is being rendered to the motorist.
- D. Officers shall **NOT** use the police vehicle to "jumpstart" a motorist's vehicle.
- E. Stranded motorists shall not be abandoned when exposed to a hazardous situation. Consideration shall be given to traffic hazards, location, time of day, weather, and priority of calls for service. This does not preclude placing devices (flares, traffic cones, etc.) to warn oncoming traffic and clearing the scene if conditions are such

that this can be done safely. Officers shall periodically check to ensure that the condition does not deteriorate. If an officer cannot check on the situation, he/she shall notify Communications for assignment of another officer to make the periodic checks. Assistance may also include requesting Communications to call a tow truck, or obtaining other services as needed. Time and duty permitting, the officers may assist stranded and disabled motorists to obtain fuel and repairs, but officers are not required to perform the repairs personally.

F. Officers shall render all practical assistance to motorists who are involved in emergency situations.

1. Vehicle Fires: Officers shall respond to vehicle fires to provide assistance to motorists that are involved, unless the officer is canceled by the Fire Department.

- a. Officers arriving at the scene of a vehicle fire shall advise the Communications Section of the extent of the fire and damage if the Fire Department has not arrived on the scene.
- b. The Communications Section shall advise Fire Communications of any pertinent information which may assist in personnel assignments and equipment needs.
- c. Officers can use the fire extinguisher located in the trunk of the vehicle, if practical.
- d. Officers shall direct or divert traffic, as needed, to expedite the smooth flow of traffic.

2. Medical Emergencies: Officers shall handle medical emergencies involving persons in vehicles in accordance with First Responder training.

- a. Upon discovery of the medical emergency, the officer shall request Fire Department personnel.
- b. To assist the Fire Department, the officer shall provide the Communications Section with the type of emergency, location, condition of patient, and any other pertinent information including requests for additional officers.

G. Vehicular Escort Services

1. Emergency Escort: Officer shall **NOT** escort privately owned vehicles to hospitals or medical facilities in an emergency mode.

If a medical emergency is encountered, an officer shall contact the Communications Section and request an ambulance, rendering first aid until EMS personnel arrive.

2. Non-emergency Escorts: Legitimate requests for scheduled law enforcement escort services include, but are not limited to, those associated with funerals,

motorcades including dignitaries, oversized vehicles, and vehicles with hazardous or unusual cargo.

- a. All requests for vehicular escort services shall be forwarded to the Traffic Safety Unit or the on duty Platoon supervisor whenever practical.
- b. Upon approval of a vehicular escort, the Traffic Safety Unit or the Platoon supervisor will ensure that the following functions are performed:
  - i. The trip route will be established in advance as well as the maximum speed to be maintained along each segment of the route.
  - ii. Point traffic control will be established, as appropriate, at locations along the scheduled route to ensure safe passage.
  - iii. Tactical control of the escort will be assigned to a specific commander, supervisor or officer in accordance with the complexity of the escort services being provided. The tactical controller will ensure that the safety of all persons involved in the escort, in addition to uninvolved motorist, is maintained.
  - iv. All non-emergency vehicular escorts are to be coordinated with minimal interference to normal vehicular movement.

## **II. Towing Procedures**

All vehicles will be towed under the guidance of **General Order C. 21**.

**UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL THE TOWING OR IMPOUNDMENT OF VEHICLES BE INITIATED TO PUNISH THE OWNER OR OPERATOR.**

## **III. Abandoned Vehicles**

Refer to **General Order C. 11**.

## **IV. Hazardous Roadway Conditions**

- A. Hazardous roadway and/or environmental conditions are defined as:
  1. Defects in the roadway itself (holes, ruts, dangerous shoulders).
  2. Lack of, or defects in, highway safety features (e.g. center roadway striping and reflectors) or improper, damaged, destroyed or visually obstructed traffic control or information signs.

3. Lack of traffic control and information signs (curve and hill warnings, stop and yield signs, speed limit signs, street and highway identification) or improper, damaged, destroyed or visually obstructed traffic control information signs.
  4. Malfunctioning traffic control devices.
  5. Defective roadway lighting systems.
  6. Obstructions--fallen trees, litter, vehicle parts, broken water mains and electrical wires.
  7. Ice or heavy snow accumulations on roadway surfaces.
  8. Fire and its attendant smoke in areas adjacent to the highway.
  9. Vehicles parked or abandoned on or near the roadway.
  10. Debris in roadway.
- B. The following procedures shall be followed in identifying, reporting and correcting hazardous roadway, roadside or environmental conditions:
1. When a hazard is identified and in the officer's opinion such hazard requires immediate correction (such as a fallen tree or electrical wire across or on any part of the traveled portion of the roadway) the Communications Section will be notified and the assistance required identified. The officer will protect the scene and direct traffic or take any other action deemed necessary to correct the situation.
- IMPORTANT:** When ice and/or snow makes driving hazardous, the Department of Public Works should be notified for mobilization. Officers shall minimize all radio traffic in reference to specific locations where salting is needed. The exception to this policy shall be extremely critical roadways which demand immediate attention.
2. When a hazard is detected that represents a potential accident situation but the threat of such is not imminent, the officer shall forward this information to the Communications Section. The Communications Section shall notify the appropriate agency to have the situation corrected. The Communications Operator shall record the information into a log indicating the date, time, location, type of hazard, agency contacted, officer, disposition of the hazard and Police Communications Operator who recorded the information.
  3. When a roadway or traffic-related sign is observed in a damaged or destroyed state, the officer shall notify the Communications Section for the appropriate notification.

**V. Hazardous Materials on Roadway**

- A. Hazardous material is defined as follows:

Any element, compound or combination thereof which is flammable, corrosive, explosive, toxic, radioactive, an oxidizer, or is highly reactive and which, because of handling, storing, processing and packaging may have detrimental effects upon operating and/or emergency personnel, the public, equipment and/or the environment.

- B. Radioactive materials are in current use by hospitals, research laboratories, industry and the military and are transported throughout the City by motor vehicles.
- C. Hazardous material collisions or spills present a serious threat to the health and safety of the general public and especially to the first officer on the scene.

- D. Officers shall take every precaution when it is believed that a collision or spill involving hazardous or radioactive materials has occurred.

- E. **THE FIRE DEPARTMENT HAS PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY IN HANDLING HAZARDOUS MATERIAL ACCIDENTS. THE POLICE DEPARTMENT SHALL PROVIDE SUPPORT FUNCTIONS TO ASSIST THE FIRE DEPARTMENT IN THE ACTUAL CONTROL AND REMOVAL OF THE HAZARDOUS MATERIAL.**

- F. When it is believed that a hazardous material spill or collision has occurred, the first officers on the scene shall:

1. Notify the Communications Section of the incident for notification to the Fire Department. The Communications Operator shall record the information into a log indicating the date, time, location, type of hazard, agency contacted, officer, disposition of the hazard and Police Communications Operator who recorded the information.
2. Request that the Platoon supervisor respond to the scene.
3. Coordinate the maintenance of a wide perimeter by closing off all access roads leading to the accident scene.
4. Evacuate non-essential people from within the perimeter scene.
5. Attempt to identify the hazardous materials involved in the collision through the identification placards on the vehicle or containers. It is important to note that this identification should be made as far away as possible. At no time shall an officer jeopardize his own safety for material identification purposes.

- G. The Platoon supervisor shall coordinate all activities with the Fire Department for the

safe resolution of the problem.

## **VI. Traffic Engineering Deficiencies**

- A. If an officer observes an engineering deficiency that is hazardous or detrimental to public safety, the officer will promptly notify the appropriate agency, i.e., Traffic Engineering, State Highway Administration, etc., via the Communications Section. Deficiencies of a lesser nature will be reported, via an Administrative Report to the Traffic Safety Unit for further analysis.
- B. The Administrative Report to the Traffic Safety Unit may include, but not be limited to: suggestions concerning traffic engineering deficiencies; more efficient use of traffic control devices; recommendations for new ordinances or recommendations for engineering improvements.
- C. If the engineering deficiency is suspected of being a primary or contributing factor in a collision, all pertinent information will be promptly relayed to the Traffic Safety Unit.
- D. Department members will submit all collision reports and other documentation identifying engineering deficiencies in a timely manner, prior to the end of tour of their duty.

Joseph S. Johnson  
Chief of Police

References
1. Accreditation Standards 61.3.1, 61.3.3, 61.4.1, 61.4.2, 61.4.3, 82.3.3
2. General Order C.11 Abandoned Vehicles, C.21 Towing and Impounding Vehicles

**Revision:** This is a new General Order